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ABSTRACT

The first annual meeting of the Southwest Reading Conference for Colleges and Universities was held in April 1952 as a result of interest expressed in college reading programs--either the improvement of existing programs or the initiation of new programs. The theme of the conference was "Developing a Reading Program for College Students." This report contains the following papers presented at the conference: "The Reading Program in the College Curriculum" by William Eller; "Problems in the Administration of the College Reading Program" by Albert J. Kingston, Jr.; "The Counseling Service in Relation to the Reading Program" by Thomas F. Richardson; "Methods, Techniques, Procedures, and Materials Used in College Reading Programs" by A. L. Long; "Possible Contributions by Colleges to High School Reading Programs" by David Sellers; "Can Colleges Help the High School Reading Program?" by William J. Robinson; and "A Developmental Reading Program" by Oscar S. Causey. This report also includes a summary of the conference, a list of answers to 40 questions submitted at the conference, and a directory of attending representatives. (JM)

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PROCEEDINGS

First Annual Meeting

SOUTHWEST READING CONFERENCE

For Colleges and Universities

April 25, 1952

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CS002646

Texas Christian University
Fort Worth, Texas

PROCEEDINGS

First Annual Meeting
SOUTHWEST READING CONFERENCE

April 25, 1952

Texas Christian University
Fort Worth, Texas

Executive Committee

Oscar S. Causey, Chairman
Texas Christian University

William Eller
University of Oklahoma

Rudolph Fiehler
Southern State College

Louie Harris
Oklahoma College for Women

Albert Kingston
Texas Agricultural and Mechanical College

The Proceedings may be obtained by writing to the chairman of the executive committee. Price, one dollar per copy.

PREFACE.

The first annual meeting of the Southwest Reading Conference for colleges and universities was held as a result of interest expressed in college reading programs by persons cooperating in a survey of reading programs in colleges and universities in the Southwest. Detailed information relating to the various types of programs was requested.

Questionnaires were sent to one hundred fifty institutions of higher learning in six states. The high percentage of replies was taken as one indication of interest in reading programs for college students. Thirty one institutions reported that they were giving such courses. A number of presidents, deans, directors of counselling and teachers of Education, English and psychology, in addition to directors of reading programs, expressed a desire either to improve the programs already under way or to initiate programs. The following quotations from replies are characteristic. "It is high time we got together to clarify our philosophies and methods." "By all means let's get together and discuss our problems". "Please give us information relating to successful procedures". "Why not have a newsletter so information can be exchanged".

Developing A Reading Program For College Students was the theme of the conference.

Publication of the proceedings was made possible by the cooperation of the speakers on the program in submitting copies of their addresses. Sincere appreciation is expressed to each person who had a part in the program for the time spent, for the contribution to the success of the conference and for making the publication of the proceedings possible.

Oscar S. Causey.

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THE READING PROGRAM IN THE COLLEGE CURRICULUM

Dr. William Eller, Director of Reading
Laboratory, University of Oklahoma

The reading habits of most adults in this country could be markedly improved through a program of specific training in speed and comprehension skills requiring only a few weeks of guided practice. For young adults in college, such improvement in reading ability can effect significant improvement in academic performance. College professors, when asked the reasons for failures among their students, usually include "poor reading and study habits" in their lists. In recognition of this cause of academic deficiency, many colleges have provided some sort of instruction in reading techniques for students of poor reading ability. Most of these college reading programs have been incorporated into the total college programs in the past decade. The attendance at this conference indicates that college officials throughout the Southwest recognize the significance of the reading problem among college and university students, even though some conference visitors are representing institutions which as yet have not planned an attack on the problem.

The widespread interest in college reading instruction stems not only from the realization of the importance of adequate reading ability in college academics, but from an awareness of the very gratifying results achieved by the current methods of teaching reading to adults. In the literature, reading speed has been accorded considerably more attention than has reading comprehension, although, of course, reading without comprehension is not really reading. The greater attention has been devoted to speed, because the typical college student in a training program will increase his rate of reading about 100%, whereas his comprehension increase during the same period may be only 10% or 15%, as measured by one of the widely-used standardized tests.

During the first eight weeks of the second semester, 1951-52, 140 students were enrolled in the reading improvement course at the University of Oklahoma. During this eight weeks session, the average increase in reading speed was 88%; the average increase in comprehension was 46%. Both percentages are based on results of two forms of the Iowa Silent Reading Tests, one form given at the beginning of the program and the alternate form at the termination. The comprehension gain is probably at least partly spurious, since a student who has performed on one form of the Iowa Silent is at an advantage when an alternate form is administered.

During this same eight weeks period, L.D. Gilmore, a clinician in the reading laboratory at the University of Oklahoma, conducted an experiment which compared improvements in reading skills made by enrolees in the college reading program with changes in reading abilities of a similar group of students who were not given formal reading instruction. Mr. Gilmore's subjects were freshman students in the Army ROTC program at Oklahoma. Two sections of these students, 42 cases, were given the eight weeks of reading training which is standard at that institution; two other

ROTC sections (33 cases) were given no reading instruction. All four sections were tested with the Iowa Silent Reading Test at the beginning of the eight weeks session, and again at the end with an alternate form of the test. During the training period, the average reading speed of the men in the two experimental sections increased from 267 words per minute to 404 words per minute. The average speed among the controls changed during that time from 269 to 273 words per minute. The improvement among the experimentals was statistically significant at the .1% level of confidence; the change among the controls was attributable to chance. The experimental sections demonstrated a moderate increase in comprehension, significant at the 10% level of confidence; the control groups showed no gains in comprehension.

Most college reading instructors who have been attacking students' reading problems for any considerable period have devoted some effort to the improvement of comprehension skills, and have experienced some success. However, since comprehension is not increased much for the average student, it should be pointed out that the marked improvement in rate of reading alone would be sufficient justification for college reading instruction, as long as such progress can be effected without loss in comprehension. The volume of reading which confronts the college student is great enough that if he can be helped to reduce his reading time by half, he should have quite a bit more time for other academic chores. One of the pioneers in the field of college reading, Dr. J.B. Stroud of the University of Iowa, used to say in jest, "If I can take a student who reads a certain number of pages an hour without understanding, and can get him to "not understand" that much printed matter in a half hour, I maintain that I've helped him."

Perhaps the need for rapid reading is most apparent when faster reading rates are considered as an asset in critical reading and thinking. Social scientists are concerned about the critical reading abilities not only of college students, but of the entire adult population. One requisite for critical reading is a good background of information, and one of the best ways to acquire a background is through wide reading. If a student can double his rate of reading, he can double his opportunities to enrich his background. By way of illustration, consider a student who wishes to find out about Socialism in England. He may begin his study by reading a book, but if he knows very little about England's socialistic programs, he can't read the book very critically. After he has read half a dozen books representing different points of view, he can read much more intelligently on the subject. In dealing with any subject, the more information a reader possesses when he begins to read, the more critically he can read; and, the more rapidly he can read, the more he can build up his informational background in a given period of time.

Here in the Southwest, there is a particular need for reading training for college students, since our students are, on the average, somewhat inferior to the average of college students throughout the country, in the matter of reading ability. Recently, Ernest A. Jones, director of the

reading program at Northeastern State College, Tahlequah, Oklahoma, surveyed the reading abilities of freshmen entering several of Oklahoma's institutions of higher education. His research indicated that 63% of the freshmen entering the University of Oklahoma in the past five years have fallen below the national median on the reading section of the Ohio State Psychological Examination. Even less reassuring was the disclosure that 78% of the freshmen entering Oklahoma A & M College fell below the median score on the reading test employed at that institution. While Jones did not collect data from any Southwestern states other than Oklahoma, it is probable that many colleges in this region would provide similar data if the experiment were repeated.

The foregoing paragraphs have dealt with the necessity for reading instruction in colleges, and the satisfying results usually obtained when such instruction is offered. Some attention must be devoted to the actual incorporation of the reading program into the college curriculum.

Most college reading programs now in existence are supervised locally by (1) the English or communications skills department, (2) the psychology-guidance department or (3) the education department. There are, as would be expected, advantages and disadvantages in each of the three arrangements. Certain personnel of the education department usually are best informed about the teaching of reading, but in some instances they have failed to realize that adult reading instruction should be different from the teaching of elementary reading in a great many respects. In colleges which have a communications skills program, the instructors of that department may well be the logical supervisors of the reading program, and the task certainly belongs in their domain. An arrangement which provides for joint management by the education and communications skills staffs has the advantages of both the methodological know-how and a wise perspective of the place of the reading instruction in the total skills program.

At present, only a few colleges and universities have reading programs which local administrators consider entirely adequate. It is common practice to administer a reading test to entering freshmen, to locate the poorest readers, and then to provide instruction to these low-scoring members of the group. While the philosophy of this approach seems reasonable, it fails to recognize the fact that many of the good readers in the freshman class -- or in any of the classes -- would improve their reading skills tremendously if instruction were provided, and it can be argued that it is just as important to help the good reader to become an outstanding reader as it is to help the poor reader to become an average reader.

Some colleges charge an extra fee for enrollment in the reading improvement course. Since special equipment and materials are usually used in the training, it seems appropriate that a nominal fee be charged, if desired, as it so often is in connection with laboratory science courses. A small fee might even discourage students who are not genuinely interested. But because the development of reading skill may mean the difference be-

tween success and failure for some students, the fee should not be excessive to the point that some poor readers couldn't afford the instruction.

Doubtless, there are many satisfactory arrangements for supervising reading programs in various local situations. The important aim right now is to make this training available to all students who can profit from it, so that they no longer need stumble along without a respectable command of this indispensable tool for learning.

PROBLEMS IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF A COLLEGE READING PROGRAM

Albert J. Kingston, Jr.
Texas Agricultural and Mechanical College

Many difficulties beset the remedial specialist who is charged with the responsibility of organizing and administering a college reading program. Many of these problems grow out of the unusual role played by a reading program in the college community. Reading programs are comparatively recent innovations and many of the difficulties which arise are due to this condition. In this discussion an attempt has been made to touch upon many of these factors. It must be realized fron the onset that some of the difficulties which are discussed will not be encountered in all institutions, and that many specific problems will arise in any one institution which are not common to other institutions. It must also be recognized that this discussion does not presume to encompass all of the problems which must be faced by the remedialist.

Analysis of the problems faced by the reading specialist probably may best be made by categorizing the difficulties into two areas: those which concern the integration of the program into the existing structure of the college or university, and those problems which arise in connection with the organization and operation of the reading program itself. It must be recognized, however, that areas are not dicotomies, but merely are convenient frames of reference employed for the purpose of clearer analysis.

In attacking the problems which arise in connection with the administration of a college reading program, it might be wise first to consider the implications of such a program upon the institution which sponsors it. Basically, the inauguration of a reading program connotes an admission that the institution seeks to apply an educational philosophy which dedicates itself to assisting the student in so far as possible in making an adequate adjustment to college study. Herein lies the first problem which faces the reading specialist. On the campus of every college, one can find many professional men who do not believe that the college should concern itself with students who lack adequate preparation or who fail to make normal adjustments. This group of academicians feel that the establishment of a reading improvement program is an overt admission of lowered academic standards and "watered course work". This conflict in philosophy becomes more apparent if course credit is proposed for student participation in the reading program. All who are engaged in the field of reading have heard exclamations of disgust and disparaging statements from faculty members who believe that an institution of higher learning should not waste its time with a student who failed to develop adequate reading skills prior to enrollment. The director of a reading program must "sell" his program to this group of the faculty. The selling cannot be done through slick, super-sales techniques, but can be done through discussions and meetings conducted in a professional manner. After a period of time, the reading specialist should be able to demonstrate to this group the value of his services by use of follow-up studies and other research methods. Another technique which

has considerable value is to invite groups of the faculty to enroll in the program so that they might gain first-hand knowledge of the methods employed and the results obtained. Most of the group who participate will become strong supporters of the program. The specialist will also have additional ammunition to utilize if he has some knowledge of the large number of accredited and highly regarded institutions which have established reading programs. He should also draw attention to the reports concerning industrial and armed forces reading programs.

Other problems develop at the opposite end of the scale. Many faculty members will welcome the establishment of a reading program and will regard it as a panacea for all of the difficulties encountered by students. The reading specialist must caution this group and carefully explain the limitations of his program. He must take pains to prevent his program from becoming the refuge of students who have all sorts of maladjustments. Many students will be referred who do not have true reading disabilities but rather have inadequate scholastic aptitude, foreign language handicaps, and social-emotional maladjustments. Although some students may have problems related to reading, such as ineffective study habits and poor spelling and writing achievements, they may best be aided by other student personnel services.

The reading specialist faces other difficulties which grow out of his subordinate position in the college hierarchy. He must secure the wholehearted cooperation of his superior if his efforts are to be fruitful. Many college administrators tend to regard a reading program in the same light as they would another academic program. This problem becomes intensified if the reading program carries credit. Often college policies and regulations hamper the specialist in individualizing his program to the extent he desires. Other difficulties arise regarding grading systems, delimiting class size, and per-pupil training cost. Sometimes administrators fail to recognize that mechanical aids, motion picture films, standardized reading tests, and test answer sheets are expensive. Some administrators tend to compare reading program expenses with the instructional costs of such related subjects as English, Education, or foreign languages. Similarly, some administrators tend to calculate the reading specialist's work load by employing the same criteria utilized to evaluate the load of an academic teacher. These administrators fail to recognize that the director of a reading program must spend considerable time in individual work conferences devoted to the diagnosis of a student's difficulties and to the planning and supervising of the pupil's program. In many college reading programs, maximum student gains are not being realized because the specialist lacks sufficient time to supervise the progress of students as closely as desired. The reading specialist must familiarize his superior with his work problems if he is to avoid these pitfalls. Despite the contrary opinion held by some college instructors, most college and university administrators are usually willing to listen to reason.

In passing, it might be well to mention another area which sometimes creates difficulties. This problem involves the question of which department or service should sponsor and operate the reading program. The development of many programs are aborted because the sponsoring group fails to enlist the support and cooperation of all the departments of the institution. Effective reading programs have been developed under the aegis of departments of Education, English, and Psychology in addition to various student personnel services. The sponsorship of the reading program should be determined by studying local conditions and the final decision should be based upon the discovery of the most effective location. The establishment of the program itself should be a joint enterprise.

Considerable discussion has been devoted to the difficulties entailed in the establishment and acceptance of the reading program within the total framework of the institution. After these difficulties have been eliminated, the remedialist must face certain problems in the organization and administration of the program itself. He must study many factors before he launches his program. A sound approach is to analyze the needs of the student population, and to design his course to satisfy these needs. He must decide which skills need emphasis and determine the amount of time which should be devoted to such phases as vocabulary development, word attack, word recognition, span of recognition training, etc. He must decide whether to employ an individualized clinical approach or to establish a group program with emphasis upon developmental reading. If his situation is typical, he will find that both approaches are needed.

As most colleges and universities have developed group programs in reading improvement, it might prove beneficial to analyze some of the difficulties which arise from this method. In the development of group programs, the specialist usually employs one of two approaches. He may utilize a "shot-gun" approach which consists of touching briefly upon many subskills or he may channel his program so that only four or five skills are emphasized. In employing either approach the specialist must make provisions for individuals whose needs are not being satisfied. His program must be flexible enough to provide for individualized training and diagnosis.

One of the most controversial questions which faces the specialist who develops a group program is whether or not course credit should be granted for student participation. Many valid arguments have been proffered to support both sides of this question. As previously mentioned, many professional men feel that credit lowers academic standards. Others fear that the reading course is in danger of becoming a haven for the student "shopper". Still others believe that if credit is given for developing adequate reading skills, credit should also be given to students who make educational, vocational, or personal adjustments with the assistance of other counseling services. Those who favor giving credit argue that many students who need the training will not seek it as readily as they should if credit is not offered. Many reading specialists feel that it is difficult to

hold students as long as they desire if no credit is allowed. Reading programs which do not carry credit often do lose as many as fifty percent of their students prior to the completion of training. Again the specialist must analyze the local situation to determine whether a more effective program can be developed if credit is offered.

If credit is offered for the reading program, certain difficulties arise in the determination of grading standards. Two methods of grading are common. One plan requires that each student be evaluated in terms of his individual progress and achievement. An alternate method is to grade students in terms of standards or norms which have been determined more or less arbitrarily. Although the latter plan seems to be unrealistic in the light of individual differences among students, it seems to be the usual method of grading students in their academic courses. Most reading specialists agree that the better plan is to grade students in terms of their progress. This technique of grading, however, causes certain difficulties. Essentially this method is dependent upon the equivalency of the test materials employed to determine the student's progress. Unfortunately, no completely adequate material or standardized tests are available. Another difficulty may arise when students discover the grading method. Some may deliberately depress their initial reading performances so that spuriously high achievement results are obtained. When credit and grades are offered for participation in a reading program, the specialist should seek constantly to deemphasize those aspects and to emphasize that the objective is reading improvement per se. One additional caution should be voiced if the program has been developed so that students are graded in terms of individual progress. The specialist must familiarize administrators, counselors, and teachers with his grading system. Faculty members who work with students must recognize that a student who has secured an above average grade in the reading program, need not be an above average or superior reader when compared to the total student population of the institution.

Certain other factors related to the actual administration of the program should also be considered. Some of these have been briefly mentioned previously. It is imperative that the specialist keep his program so flexible that the needs of each student can be satisfied. The framework of any program should be sufficiently broad so that the substitution of one training technique and exercise for another can be made easily whenever diagnosis of a student's difficulties indicate the desirability of such a step. As motivation and desire to improve play important roles in reading improvement, the specialist should be constantly alert for opportunities to develop and increase these factors. In this connection he should pay careful attention to the various materials utilized in the program. All materials should be checked in terms of interest appeal and readibility. Material should be varied, and range from comparatively simple to complex. The specialist will sometimes find that it is difficult to obtain as much material as he desires, although publishers are doing a better job in developing

suitable material. Still the program director must realize that many of the students who enroll in the program will have strong negative feelings regarding reading. These antipathies will have to be broken down if the reading training is to be effective.

As previously mentioned, reading improvement programs tend to be costly. The program director should explore the possibilities of transferring some of the cost to the students who benefit from the training. One of the most effective and simplest methods to do so is to charge a laboratory fee. If this method is not possible, another workable system is to compile the exercise material into a manual which each student is required to purchase. Local conditions will determine which of these practices is better.

Problems sometimes develop in connection with the location of the reading laboratory and its physical facilities. Whenever possible, the laboratory should be located in a comparatively quiet, well-lighted and well-ventilated room. It should be located in a central spot on the campus, which at the same time is somewhat removed from the main roads of student traffic. The room should be allocated to the reading program so that equipment may be readily available. Nothing is more discouraging than the task of having to assemble and disassemble equipment before and after use. The availability of equipment often encourages the students to use it during their free hours. Items of equipment should be protected, however, from the curious student to whom they are enticing playthings. If feasible, the laboratory should be located in the proximity of the counseling services so that referrals may be made readily when deemed advisable.

In this discussion an attempt has been made to touch upon many of the difficulties which beset the director of a college reading program. It is realized that many problems have not been mentioned and that none have been fully explored. Many other problems arise in some institutions which are not typical or usual. In other schools many of the problems discussed will never arise. The conscientious reading specialist will always face problems in the administration of his program. An ideal program is never achieved. When the specialist has solved most of the existing problems in his program, he should seek new ones. The best reading programs are not static, but rather are dynamic. It is only when one is aware of difficulties and shortcomings that growth and improvement take place.

THE COUNSELING SERVICE IN RELATION TO THE READING PROGRAM

Dr. Thomas F. Richardson, Dean of Students, Texas Christian University

In considering this topic, I should like to approach it from the viewpoint of the clinical counselor. The clinical psychologist or clinical counselor, as he approaches the individual case, always wants to know three things about the person: (1) Motivation, (2) Capacity, and (3) Control. I shall discuss each of these briefly and then show my view of the place of the reading clinic in a counseling situation.

Motivation: This means goals or objectives. Does a student really want to achieve an education? Does he really desire to master a course? Does he hope to secure a college education and a professional education and then continue to be studious enough to keep abreast of his business or profession? Does he realize the value of scholarly pursuit as an avocation or life enjoyment? There are some of the motives or goals that must be considered in counseling college students.

Capacity: Capacity includes all of those characteristics of a person which will enable him to achieve his goals. In other words, capacity is "What it takes" to cope with all the factors of one's life situation in order to move successfully toward the achievement of established goals. In this category, we think of native intelligence, personality factors, temperament, aptitudes, energy, endurance, perseverance, emotional stability, and many other such, as skills.

Control: Control, in this brief presentation, may be thought of as the ability of an individual to bring to bear his capacities toward the successful achievement of his goals. It also implies his being able to curb some impulses in order to make progress toward a chosen goal. Underlying the whole concept of control is the implication that one must be able to avoid many immediate goals that may be desirable in order that a more desirable future or more distant goal may be achieved. Also, there is the whole matter of the ability of the individual to deal with the environment realistically in order to avoid the loss of self-esteen, to avoid frustration, and all other threats and to face life as a well-adjusted individual. Without prolonging this discussion too far, I will point out some of the ways that control may be expressed.

Repression, or overcontrol is evidenced when a person is afraid to act for fear of the consequences to his ego or self-integrity.

Undercontrol, or over-expressiveness: Here we find the individual moving ahead of his culture in an uninhibited, impulsive, or over-aggressive manner. This state can cause one much embarrassment and much concern on the part of friends, associates, and counselors.

Anxiety or tentative control is evidenced when ones goals are too remote and when one must postpone achievement over too long a period.

I hope that this introduction has not been too long and that I may now have an opportunity to mention my assigned topic. Just what does all of this have to do with reading? In the few remaining minutes I shall attempt to point out some implications.

1. For most students, the real goals that should motivate many hundreds of pages of reading matter must be successfully mastered.

2. Reading skill becomes one of the most, if not the most, needed capacity.

3. Speed of reading must be achieved in order to even keep in sight of the goal.

4. Comprehension in reading determines the quality of progress toward achievement.

5. Accuracy of interpretation of the concepts read determines the soundness of learning.

6. Even learning the enjoyment of reading becomes a capacity much to be desired.

7. Frustration over the lack of this capacity leads to many emotional blocks and ultimately a defeatist attitude toward the whole matter of getting an education.

8. I am convinced that the inability to read and consequently the inability to study is one of the greatest problems facing many college students.

From these views, now let me conclude with my statement of the relationship between the counseling services and the reading program.

Student personnel services are defined as all of those services which are designed to aid students in getting the most out of their college experience. Sometimes the designation non-academic is used to describe these services. From this definition, it is easy to see that a reading program is a student personnel service. In fact, it is sometimes operated through the student personnel office.

At Texas Christian University, we recognize this very important service and cooperate in the following ways: (1) By administering the diagnostic reading test for freshmen students in order that we may discover those who need the reading service, (2) By cooperating with Mr. Causey in presenting the program to entering students, (3) By referring students from any level who are obviously in need of the reading service.

We are very interested in this program and believe that its success will improve the chances for success of a considerable sector of our students. I hope that we may be able to follow through on some research to find out specifically how students are being aided by these services.

METHODS, TECHNIQUES, PROCEDURES AND MATERIALS USED IN THE COLLEGE READING PROGRAM

Dr. A. L. Long, Professor of Education,
Stephen F. Austin State College

There are few if any aspects of the study-learning situation which are as important to the student as effective reading. It has been only in recent times that people have expressed definite concern regarding the proficiency of reading at the college level. As teachers of more mature students, we have been inclined to regard reading as a simple, easy, or non-essential skill which in time each individual student would in some mysterious manner acquire. Bossing states that:

> "Indeed, the beginnings of wide interests in the subject among American educational leaders came after World War. More studies of a scientific nature on the subject of reading were published in 1923 than in the period 1880-1916."[1]

This new interest and impetus in reading came about largely from three factors or causes; (i.e.) (1) because of the reading inefficiencies of college students, (2) because of the scientific discoveries of many truths which directly or indirectly affect reading, (3) because reading demands are much greater than formerly.

There was a time when, if a student did an inferior quality of work, he was regarded as being low in general mental ability. At present the tendency is to investigate and see really what is causing the inefficiency. The data seem to indicate that reading inefficiency may be due to any one of a dozen causes, or a combination of two or more causes, some of which may be of a physical or emotional nature. With the different instruments now employed for the purpose of measuring ability and performance of students, we should be able to locate the cause of almost any kind of difficulty.

The need for efficient reading today is much greater than it has ever been. It was estimated some time ago that the average college graduate was required to read seventy per cent more material than was required just ten years prior to that time. Notice that nothing at all is said about the quality of reading which is required. It seems that it would be only reasonable to expect that college students now are not only required to read more material, but to become a more proficient reader, even to the point of becoming expert in the art of reading.

It is estimated by reliable authorities that approximately fifteen per cent of adults in our present society cannot read a newspaper intelligently. It was demonstrated in the Armed Forces in World War II that eight weeks of concentrated training would produce or result in reading efficiency of ninety per cent of the subjects attaining a reading efficiency comparable to that of fourth grade reading level.

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[1]Bossing, N.L., Teaching in Secondary Schools, p. 549.

Studies made of reading in institutions of higher learning show that from twenty-five to fifty per cent of the institutions of higher learning are now participating in reading programs of one kind or another. In a study made by the University of Minnesota, results showed sixty per cent of the 334 liberal-arts colleges, teacher's colleges, and normal schools have remedial reading programs. A large per cent of the institutions involved in this study that were not giving reading programs said they were planning to offer remedial reading programs the following year. In a survey of six states in the Southwest, Professor O.S. Causey, Texas Christian University found that thirty six colleges and universities were making use of mechanical devices in reading programs.

The number of reading programs and the types of reading materials used in institutions of higher learning in the U.S. seem to be legion. No two schools have reading programs alike in all respects. The variations seem to be in terms of (1) the overall type of reading program, (2) the selection of students to be instructed, (3) the manner of selecting students for instruction, (4) how the instruction is to be given and for how long a period of time, (5) the material used in the instructional program, and (6) who is to give the instruction.

However, there are a few respects in which the institutions of higher learning are alike in the matter of reading programs: (1) practically all institutions of higher learning seem to recognize a need for training in the field of reading. (2) most of the institutions of higher learning are attempting to improve the reading status of students, (3) from one fourth to one half of the institutions of higher learning have a well defined program of remedial reading now in operation.

As a rule, remedial reading instruction is preceded by a testing or an appraisal program. This is done of course, for diagnostic purposes. Generally speaking, there are three large catagories in which reading appraisals may be made:

(1) Observation of the pupil or student by the teacher.
(2) The use of standardized and objective teacher-made tests.
(3) Diagnosis made, which is based on the results of mechanical devices.

In nearly every reading program some special device, skill, technique, or method of instruction is employed. In many reading programs there are to be found several skills, techniques, or a combination of two or more of them are used with good results.

The divisions for the remaining part of the discussion are to be found under captions of techniques, and materials, and methods.

1. Drills and Exercises

Drills for the improvement of reading as outlined by Luella Cole in her book, The Improvement of Reading, seem to have set a pattern around which many devices have been developed. Here an effort is made to increase the efficiency of eye movements during the reading process. The first drill consists of three regular designated symbols per line on which

the fixations are made, together with the lines indicating the path of the return sweep. In the second drill, words are substituted for symbols. In the third drill or exercise, a group of words is substituted for the one word. In the fourth exercise, a simple story is typed so the lines are about equal to those in the book, and the distance between the lines is a little more than average.

a. It seems that the outmoded metronoscope was made for the purpose of putting into operation many of these exercises. It is an instrument which was used for the purpose of controlling reading at different rates of speed. The reading material itself was presented through a series of windows or shutters which opened and closed in successive left to right movement or order.

2. Manuals and Workbooks

In almost every reading program, some form or procedure is outlined in a manual or workbook. Usually directions and explanations are given, and assignments are made and reference material provided. This sort of an operation makes for an organized and routinized program. There are certain times for the performance of certain tasks, check-ups, etc.

3. Standardized Reading Tests.

Reading tests have been developed for the purpose of measuring both rate and comprehension of reading; as a rule, selected reading material in tests of this kind cover timely, thoughtful and developmental subjects in Psychology, History, Economics and Politics. There are items so arranged as to require understanding in order to determine the word, sentence meaning, or to get the main idea in a paragraph. These reading selections when presented say, one each week, may be carefully timed and tested so as to determine the improvement in rate and comprehension.

4. The tachistoscope.

This instrument is a slide projector which is equipped with a flashmeter and controls exposure time. At the beginning of the training, one should start by flashing on a screen three to five digits or one word at something like a tenth of a second. The amount of material should be gradually increased to include seven or eight digits or a phrase at the rate of a hundredth of a second. If ten to fifteen minutes are spent twice each week in practice of this kind, it is believed that the student will widen his span of acuity and thereby decrease the time required for comprehension. This, of course, will also increase the speed of reading and thereby greatly improve the proficiency of reading.

5. Moving Picture Film.

The reading film is another technique now used to present reading material. Every two or three days, or once each week, a film in the series of some fourteen to sixteen films is shown. The text material is fairly adult in content and lively in style. Again, at the beginning, the amount of material shown at a time is small, about a word at a glance, with the speed

slow -- something like 175-200 words per minute. Toward the end of the series, speed may have been increased to show a half a line of print at a time, and the rate to the extent of 650 to 900 words per minute. The film has many advantages, it tends to increase or widen the span of perception, develop rhythm, and prevent regressions.

6. The Reading Pacer.

This is an instrument which fits over a book or similar printed material. It has a shutter which descends, or comes down over the page at a controlled rate of speed. The shutter acts to control the rate of reading speed and prohibits regressive movements. Individuals and very small groups may use the accelerator. Best results seem to be obtained from individual drill periods ranging from twenty to forty minutes, two or three times each week. The length of practice period will vary with the type of material read and the individual student. Perhaps all material should be graded as to readability and calibrated for the speed of reading. There should be an abundance of easy reading material in the form of books, magazines, pamphlets, and periodicals which is easily accessible to students.

METHODS OF INSTRUCTION

1. The Classroom Method.

The classroom method of instruction is usually employed where students have been selected and grouped according to scholastic standing or reading ability. Groups for reading instructions vary in size and kind, depending upon the needs of the students. Usually courses of this kind are offered in the field of Educational Psychology, Psychology, or as a part of the work normally given in Education and English courses. Courses of this type ordinarily carry two to three semester hours of credit.

2. Combination of Library Study Hall Type.

This program usually centers around the librarian, with teachers as assistants or helpers. Usually, an order of performance is established early in the reading program. This order of performance may be provided in a manual which has been developed by the group. Directions, explanations, assignments, and exercises are given as the program develops. An abundance of easy reading materials is made available to pupils and students, in the form of books, magazines, pamphlets and reports. This material is so arranged as to provide an opportunity for students to read without having to check out or check in any material. No individual reports are required.

3. The Laboratory Type.

The laboratory method of reading instruction usually follows a pattern which outlines a diagnostic program, followed by explanations, discussions, and exercises, principally individual exercises. The activities are usually directed by a laboratory instructor or technician. The whole program may be required of entering students or it may be purely voluntary on the part of students. In many cases students set aside an afternoon each week for practice exercise. This seems to result in much

greater reading efficiency than the required drill period done in class, or in a class assignment. Normally, there are tests and appraisals made, both subjective and objective, of the students progress.

4. The Clinical Type.

The clinical method employed by some schools is very much like the laboratory method. However, the clinical method, as a rule, is given more to the discovery of what is wrong with the student, while the laboratory method is given more to controlled experimentation. There seems to be greater care given to diagnosing the difficulties of individual students and providing specialized training for abnormal cases than is provided in the laboratory method. As a rule, more devices and mechanical equipment are employed. Equipment, such as the teleobinocular, orphthalmograph, tachistoscope, etc., are made use of in this method of instruction.

By way of summary there are two large headings under which the points of this discussion naturally come. They are:

A. The different techniques, devices, and materials used in the process of instructing reading.
   (1) Drills and Exercises
   (2) Manuals and Workbooks
   (3) Standardized Reading Tests
   (4) Tachistoscope
   (5) Moving Picture Film
   (6) The Reading Accelerator

B. Methods of Instruction
   (1) The Classroom Method
   (2) The Library Study Hall Type
   (3) The Laboratory Method
   (4) The Clinical Method

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POSSIBLE CONTRIBUTIONS BY THE COLLEGES TO HIGH SCHOOL READING PROGRAMS

Mr. David Sellars, Coordinator of Instruction, Fort Worth Public Schools

I appreciate very much this opportunity of speaking with the college teachers of reading and of accepting your offer of friendship and cooperation in our mutual task of improving the efficiency with which human beings gain meanings from the printed page.

In speaking frankly and honestly of the contributions which I think you can make for us, I must make it clear that no criticism of you or of your work is intended. The mere fact that you have invited me to be here with you is evidence of your efforts and of your professional zeal. If, in spite of my plea, you do imply criticism from any of my remarks, then let it apply to persons who are not present. As usual, in a meeting of this sort, those not in attendance are the ones who need the sermon.

Your first contribution to high school reading can be to graduate persons who can read. Junior High schools always complain that pupils have not been taught to read in the elementary school. Senior high schools complain about the junior high schools. Colleges complain about the senior high schools. Now, as a consumer of your products, I am saying that far too many of them cannot read effectively, and, what is worse, they cannot teach effectively a skill which they cannot perform. I always shudder when I recall the teacher of science who complained to her supervisor that her pupils had learned nothing in spite of her efforts to teach them about bone formation. When the visitor attempted to help and asked the pupils the meaning of the word, "ossification," in the phrase, "center of ossification," the teacher flashed out, "Oh, we haven't learned the vocabulary yet; we have just been doing the reading." Unless you graduate persons who can read and who know the mechanics of reading, we are not likely to have good teachers of anything.

Most of you, because of inadequate resources of staff and materials, confine your efforts to remedial programs available only to defective readers. This is needed and good; my only criticism is that it is too inadequate. None of the college students is fully efficient in reading; the better ones, as well as the weaker ones, need reading instruction. If your colleagues doubt the universal need for your services, contrast for them the opinions of reading experts as expressed in the Twenty-Fourth Yearbook of the N.S.S.E. and the opinions of the same experts as expressed in the Thirty-Sixth Yearbook of the same society. You will recall that in the Twenty-Fourth Yearbook the experts decided that direct instruction in reading could safely be restricted to the primary grades. After the primary grades it was, "Let the child read to learn, and, incidentally, he will learn to read." It took only a few years of experience with this slogan, however, to cause these same experts to say in the Thirty-Sixth Yearbook that direct instruction in reading is needed in the primary grades, in the intermediate grades, in the high schools, and in the colleges. Please expand your departments and spread the light of your teaching to all college

learners, not just the defective ones!

In teaching your pupils to read you must, of course, do many things, but please, I urge you, emphasize two of them. First, teach your pupils that there are many kinds of reading and that a person can be proficient in some of them without being proficient in others. Full realization of this may still the useless complaints of teachers of special subjects and lead them to accept their obvious duty to teach the special kind of reading required by their subjects. Next, teach your pupils to read critically and with discrimination. Too many of your graduates who become our teachers think that learning has taken place when a pupil calls the words from his book, memorizes some of them, and recites (without understanding) a few of them.

A second great aid that I request from you for our program is that you recognize, and that you help others to recognize, that your methods and materials are not necessarily suitable for high school pupils. The fault is our own, I know, but all too long have public school people sinned in aping the methods of college teachers. The truth is that our pupils and your pupils are quite different in maturity and ability. Your metronoscopes, opthalmoscopes, tachistoscopes, and reading rate accelerators are primarily valuable in working with the eyes and in developing reading speed. Neither of these is our greatest problem.

In what I now say I realize that I am guilty of oversimplification. But let us reduce the number of reading skills to three: Word recognition, comprehension, and speed. Most of us, I hope, insist that reading should always be taught as a whole process; that is, each pupil should always recognize the words in his reading matter, he should then comprehend the sentences, paragraphs, chapters, and book, and he should do all of this with increasing speed. It is yet true, nevertheless, that these three skills do not need and should not receive equal emphasis at all levels of the instructional program. In the primary grades it is useless to stress comprehension and speed when pupils cannot even recognize the words, so the primary teacher places major emphasis upon word attack and minor emphasis upon comprehension and almost no emphasis upon speed. In the intermediate schools and high schools greater emphasis can be placed upon comprehension, but overemphasis upon speed is likely to have negative rather than positive values. At the college level, apparently, you pay us the magnificent compliment of assuming that we have done a thorough job on the word attack skills and comprehension skills and that you can safely, through your machines and gadgets, concentrate upon speed. I do not presume to judge, in any manner, your practices for I am not a college reading expert. But, please, join me in convincing high school teachers of reading that college methods cannot be transferred willy-nilly into high school.

It has been a very great pleasure to be with you, and I wait with pleasure your comments and questions.

CAN THE COLLEGES HELP THE HIGH SCHOOL READING PROGRAM?

Dr. William J. Robinson, Director of
Research, Dallas Public Schools

Probably no one subject in The American Public has more practicing pseudo-specialists than the field of "Reading". In the vernacular, more "guff" has been written about reading and reading instruction than the "Texas War of Independence." This is both good and bad! Good, in that it indicates a deep and driving interest and attacks on a problem. "Bad" in the sense that we people in research too often feel we must "get something on paper" even to the extent of saying differently something that has been said seven times prior. This leads us to confuse teachers by verbal camouflage and generalities instead of giving them tools of battle. This may be that Semantics - the manipulation and use of word connotation - makes our common problems difficult. Good's "Dictionary of Education" for example contains a vocabulary of twenty-thousand words. About 90% of these have been invented by educators, borrowed from other disciplines, passed down from the history of education and given new meanings. This means 400 new terms or concepts a year, or to the classroom teacher better than one a day, over the half-century. The term "activity" has a family of ideas numbering 61 different meanings around it, i.e.: extra-curricular, activity unit, activity plan, etc. The "individual" has 30 subsidiary ideas. Social 154 specific meanings and "tests" 244 detail forms. The verbal mastery of terminology in education is a colossal task beyond many of our teachers. The mastery of the ideas behind such terminology is fine intellectual activity -- and is important, but let us not forget that the efficiency of the teaching profession in a materialistic, democratic society is measured not by its "babble," "Jargon", terminology, or ideas, but by how well we "nurture" the young into maturity so as to provide emotionally matured citizens. These citizens must perpetuate the democratic society. This means basically the 3-R's must remain the cornerstone of education.

We advance the suggestion that many educators are indulging in a form of educational rationalization when they expand their energies in construction of labels. The end product of our classes -- the adult citizen -- is the criterion of our success. "Can do" should become our motto. Your idea -- your terminology -- your concept, however promising, is useful in the education process only when the teacher uses it successfully with children. We must remember the job of educating children is in the hands of the teachers who do not invent new techniques or new terminology. They use the ones they get in college classes or from supervisory efforts. Social logic demands they "keep up with the Jones's" by becoming sensitive to the educational language. The need is urgent for us to demonstrate wholeheartedly that we "can do" rather than "talk". Lay people have accused us of babbling! Are we?

Are we depriving the pupil of spiritual essence when we attempt our "integration" so he becomes a part of a group? Your theme has been one of "group participation" - one of subduing and channeling the child's emotions

and harmonizing his attitudes to the group. The mechanics may be one of socio-drama, group therapy, dynamics, or a dozen others -- yet in our "integration" or "grouping" we examine the psychological premise of a "coherent culture" and ask out college friends two questions about the attitude of these groups (whether for reading or social studies):

(1) "How are the "correct" attitudes and "good" ends to be determined?

(2) Who is going to determine them?

Whyte has termed our efforts at grouping, "integration", "group dynamics", as "groupthink". He questions the results and poses other questions for us.

(1) Is the purpose of education to make us alike - or different?

(2) Is our job in high school reading to make everyone alike - or different?

In essence we are referring to the continual differences between basic and applied research. This is true today where reading is the concern on the high school level. Emphasis must rest with applied research in reading on the secondary level.

The interrelationship between reading ability, personal characteristics, home and family influences, mental hygiene, and experiential background are not particularly clear as found in research. Colleges and universities might clarify these relationships through a better applied research program.* Research suggests that a large number of personal factors influence reading competence, that the maladjustment as indicated by different symptomology may be the cause, may be the results, or may be concomitant with reading disability, or with personal maladjustment. In other words which comes first?

When a study-habit inventory, an informal reading inventory, a reading biography, an interest and personality test or other types of tests, procedures or techniques are utilized to provide information about the pupil they can be only as effective as the classroom teacher is capable. Therefore, a job of the university is to make the high school teacher proficient in the use of those instruments.

The college can help the capability and efficiency of the classroom teacher by a program designed to assist him in "following through" on the clinical program. The university owes to every teacher, a practical knowledge of the competencies and limitations of clinical work.

Experience in public schools has taught the author that as a school psychologist it is futile to separate or segregate clinical cases from the normal classroom environment. Where this dichotomy exists teachers are capable of developing and referring for study personality and academic disabilities in children in far greater numbers than any clinic, or group

*Applied or Operational research as opposed to basic research.

of clinics, can treat. It is a losing battle and the clinics soon find themselves overcome by great numbers of disability cases. There is a solution to such a problem! It is classroom level competency and administration level understanding. Clinical experience for each classroom teacher is another partial answer to this problem. In Dallas we request that each teacher of reading serve a "rotating internship" in a reading clinic with the reading specialists. This enables her to become acquainted with clinical procedures and methodology. This "acquaintance" or "exposure may be as short as three weeks; however, a six-week, part-time, planned internship is recommended. Emphasis during the teacher's tenure must be on the practical aspects. We have constructed our plan of instruction in the "internship program" around the major essentials of reading disability as found in Chapters 12, 13, 14 of Durrell's "Improvement of Basic Reading Abilities". (5)

Reading instruction in the classroom depends upon the philosophy of education and the concept of psychology of learning held by the administrator and the teacher. I, for one, do not fear the so-called authoritarian point of view in reading. Critics of such a philosophy utilize a synthetic logic by being concerned about the possible bad effects of a reading program in which emphasis is placed on mechanics of reading and little thought is given to joys, the fears, the abilities, etc. of children. As a matter of fact, research indicates that to teach reading the teacher must still have the child read successfully.

Knowing that our patrons expect our children to read we would like the colleges to help answer some of the following problems for the prospective teacher before they send them out as trained practitioners:

1. Has the college given the teacher the training in growth patterns of children?
2. Has the university given the teacher experience with the mechanics of reading so she may utilize them?
3. Has the university taught the teacher, herself, to read?
4. You "huff and Puff" about children's needs -- tell us in specifics what these needs are. You lose us in your masses of generalities.
5. Has the university trained the teachers to measure (or evaluate) change?
6. College professors speak of "resource people" -- show teachers what you mean. Do you mean "resources or rehash"?
7. Have you trained administrators to recognize the Reading problems and do something about them?
8. What do you do about the relationships of the multi-ages?
9. Have you made every teacher a reading demonstrator? In my opinion the textbook people have done a good job there. Maybe college people might learn from them. Often I am asked by teachers where they may get good practical reading instruction. My reply is to spend a year with a major publishing company.

It becomes the difference between "can do" and "can tell", or theory and practice.

If reading is effectively taught in rather clearly defined stages of development it would follow that these stages hold true for most learnings. Is this true? The analysis of learning difficulties, including reading, following the general pattern of diagnosis, guidance and appraisal. Is good psychology in most areas of learning also good psychology for reading? The teaching of mathematics involves many psychological concepts identical with the teaching of reading. All basic symbols of our language total 35. Twenty-six letters, nine numbers. The principles of manipulation of each are similar. Have colleges recognized this?

With the organismic, dynamic, or developmental concept of education, reading is considered a thought concept process. This is not new -- only a refined version of the old idea that reading transcends all subject matter lines. Colleges would do well to spend more time with the prospective teacher, and the teacher, in growth concepts. Many courses on "Individual Differences" lack reference to longitudinal growth patterns. In my opinion, organismic maturity must be considered basic to any college course where diagnosis of learning difficulties is considered. Teachers teach by distinctive instructional patterns. This may be due to the emphasis on method. Regardless of the cause, diagnosis begins with a distinctive pattern which involves two concepts, maturation and learning. "Achievement in reading is an interaction between the inner potential of the child and experiences, of guidance and of maturity. Actually no child follows our theoretical average, which is one year of gain in reading for one year of living. Multi-ages must find a place in the base for diagnosis in reading. Have colleges shown teachers how to apply such ages?

Teachers do a good job of guidance in Reading instruction. Here theory is more easily applied. It should be recognized that in the guidance of the retarded reader in high school, the high school principal occupies the key position in any coordinated attack on educational procedures, and therefore, must be held responsible for the secondary reading program. Because the reading material in high school texts is more difficult than that in the elementary school texts, it is not only sensible, but essential, to continue to teach pupils to read by helping the pupil to refine and develop reading abilities on the secondary level. You people in colleges might attack this problem in two ways:

1. A course in applied reading instruction for faculty members of secondary schools, including the principal.
2. Reading instructions on all levels.

On these two points college faculties have made good progress. However, the need for a more practical approach still exists. Such courses should include a plan developing the following sequence of instructions:

1. Preparation and development of a reading lesson.
2. Ability grouping and adjustment of the individual in a classroom.
3. Semantics and Logic of symbols, letters, words.

4. Development of reading skills (interpretation skills).
5. Method of word attack: (a) Contextual, (b) Word form (c) structural, (d) Phonetic, (e) Dictionary.
6. Reading in content fields.
7. Methods of giving oral book reports.
8. Individual help for teachers.

Essentials of a good remedial program possess the same fundamentals as a good developmental program:

1. Thorough diagnosis.
2. Systematic guidance.
3. Provisions of diversified reading materials.
4. Careful evaluation.

Many college remedial programs are too highly mechanized or overmachined. Machines, regardless of their nature, will not do the job. They will assist in specific areas but are not a cure for reading ills. Generally, they'll do one job if -- and I should like to emphasize -- if accompanied by a technically trained specialist. Carson, Westover, Tinker, Witty, and Gates, et al have all verified this through research. The general conclusions indicate that you might as well send the child to the library for a free reading period as to spend his time with mechanical methods. This statement should be qualified until college people provide us with differential results for children's work on machines at varying levels of reading ability and the various multi-ages. To my knowledge colleges have not given us the answer to this problem.

Findings are fairly consistent that the elementary grade girls are better than boys on the average in reading comprehension, vocabulary and basic skills. Boys tend to show superiority in arithmetic. Stroud and Lindquist (11) report that at the secondary level boys are superior on most tests, while girls tend to maintain their superiority in reading. Yet age for age girls exceed boys in most developments in the multi-age factors? The colleges can give more light on this problem.

Universities and colleges have gone overboard on the ocular factor involved in reading. Among the mass of reports on vision little agreement can be found on the general importance of visual defects as the disturbing factor in reading. Evidence of growth indicates reading to be a central rather than a peripheral sense organ factor. The evidence found in the literature would indicate that most of the studies in vision are dealing with slight differences in averages and not the wide range in ability found among the children in a classroom situation.

It must be pointed out, however, that the various studies in measures of efficiency in eye movements do show relationship with tests of speed and comprehension. Are not eye movements the symptoms and not the causes of inefficient reading ability? As a matter of fact, the eyes in reading are patterned by the requirements of the reading task. Research coming from our university laboratories have not, as yet, fully informed us what factors of eye adjustments in reading are due to learning and what part to

maturation and why. Jones and Morgan (8) point out that eye movements have a familial basis. How does this affect the secondary reading problem?

The teachers of reading skills in the high school would like the college laboratories to provide them with a clarification of the effectiveness of a nonoral and oral method of reading on the secondary level. We are not pleased with your present results. We would like you to show us the effectiveness, or superiority, when related to the wide range of individual differences among children in a classroom. We agree that research indicates more evidence for lip movements by the oral than nonoral reader. The evidence also favors the nonoral reader in factors of speed. What evidence favors such factors as word recognition, syllabication, word attack, and contextual construction in the nonoral reader? May we point out that Katz (10) states the problem of "gestalt" which plays a part in contextual clues and syllabication often becomes really one of "gestaltqualitan" -- a quality concept. College laboratories have only begun to tell us the answers here?

College research might help to solve, to better satisfaction, the question of reading failures and relationship to emotional - personality - social problems. In a two-year study underway among more than 500 reading failures in Dallas Public Schools we have found about 60% of our cases due to problems in this area. An analysis of the same 500 children's written work indicates 54% write illegibly when making letters A, E, R, and T. Most of the group (51%) frequently find the numerals 5, 6, and 7 unreadable. Why? You may help here.

Our histories indicate that if a child comes from a "home in conflict or broker", "a too indulgent home", "a too sick or too poor home", "a too 'old' parents home, or a "reject (not wanted) home" the teacher has a reading problem. Transpathy will help the teacher to a degree here --- yet it is unfair in our present stage of knowledge to ask the classroom teacher to do good developmental reading with such children.

Teachers are specialists in group relationships but are usually lay-people in individual treatment. Could not the training for the individual processes be better handled by the college people so as to increase the teacher efficiency?

There are many other contributions we might ask you college people to make to high school and elementary school reading work. You will assist us most effectively and immediately if you will write so we may understand "your specifics" and "if you" demonstrate your thesis rather than "lecture your point." We should like to see you rid yourselves of the "grapho-mania" --- the inordinate impulse to write something --- that has affected most institutions and give marked concern to class demonstration using the teacher as your demonstrator.

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A DEVELOPMENTAL READING PROGRAM FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS

Oscar S. Causey, Director of Reading
Laboratory and Professor of Education,
Texas Christian University

The purpose of the reading program at Texas Christian University is improvement of the reading ability of college students.

Success in college, and frequently in business and the professions, depends in great measure upon the individual's ability to read well. The bulk of information is to be found in books, journals, reports and magazines. Mastery of the printed page is open only to those who can read with some fair degree of comprehension and some fair degree of speed. With few exceptions students who are most successful have developed superior reading ability. With few exceptions students who are dropped from college for poor scholarship, or are put on probation, are students who read slowly and with poor comprehension.

Few persons have developed reading ability comparable to their intelligence. Students have capacity for learning more than they do. The increase in reading ability, which comes from better reading habits, brings a valuable aid for increase in learning. All college students, regardless of how well or how poorly they read, can improve their reading ability in a properly conducted course in developmental reading.

The administration of Texas Christian University decided to begin a reading program before the director of the program was employed. The present program began in the fall semester 1950. The policy and plans were discussed in the Deans' Council. The various schools and departments of the University gave their support from the beginning of the program. There is close cooperation between the counselling service and the reading laboratory. The numerous counsellors are supplied with information relating to students that enables them to advise students wisely concerning the reading program.

The success of the reading program depends upon the methods and techniques used. By use of the correct methods and techniques students are aided in improving five basic reading skills -- comprehension, rate, reading in thought units, vocabulary, and directed reading -- and in the integration of these skills. The result is a better reader.

The reading laboratory is open to all students and faculty members. Students from the freshman, sophomore, junior and senior classes, as well as graduate students, take the course in developmental reading. Professional people, members of business organizations and military personnel who by the nature of their work are required to do extensive reading enroll in the Evening College. The instruction is individualized and adjusted to the needs of each student. Upon entering the course each stu' dent's reading ability is determined in terms of the chosen basic reading skills. During the conferences which follow each student becomes familiar with the procedures he is to follow for one semester in improving his ability to read.

During the year and a half the reading program has been in operation three hundred twenty-five students have completed the work in the Reading Laboratory. The progress made by this number of students is as follows:

Average Initial Comprehension ... 81%
Average Final Comprehension ... 90%
Average Initial Rate ..... 219 words per minute
Average Final Rate ..... 400 words per minute
Average Gain (by reading score). . 102%

To arrive at a score that measures a combination of comprehension and rate in an initial score, and also in a final score, use is made of the equation

$$R.S. = \frac{R. \times C.}{100}$$

In this equation R.S. = reading score, R = rate and C = comprehension.

None of the three hundred twenty-five students have failed to improve reading ability. It may be noted again that the average gain is 102 percent. Only twenty students, or six percent of the total number, gained twenty-five percent or less. More than half of those trained gained one hundred percent or more.

The greatest gain was 376 percent. This freshman, a girl, made a comprehension score of 98 percent, and a reading rate of 695 words per minute. The second greatest gain was 364 percent by a girl in the freshman class who improved her comprehension 22 percent and attained a rate of 687 words per minute.

The highest rate of 916 words a minute was attained by a young man in the senior class.

A credit of two semester hours is given for the course in Developmental Reading. The curriculum committee of the University has approved credit for three semester hours beginning in the fall of 1952.

Work is offered in the Graduate School for training of teachers of reading in colleges and high schools. Methods, techniques, procedures and materials for Developmental Reading at high school level have been prepared and tested.

In addition to textbooks the books listed below are used. Special materials and procedures have been developed for enabling the students to profit by use of these books.

Better Reading by Elizabeth A. Simpson
Fighting South (The), by John Temple Graves
First Two Decades of Life (The), Merry and Merry
Hawthorne Selected Tales and Sketches, Nathaniel Hawthorne
History of Texas Christian University, Colby D. Hall
How to Read a Book, Mortimer Adler
Kimball Contest Copy, by John N. Kimball
Moby Dick, Herman Melville

New Testament
Reading Laboratory Workbook, by Oscar S. Causey
Reading and Vocabulary Development, by C.O. Weber
Story -- A Critical Anthology (The) edited by Mark Schorer
Story of the Johns Hopkins (The), Bernheim

A SUMMARY OF THE CONFERENCE

Dr. Rudolph Fiehler, Head of English
Department, Southern State College

The first Southwest Reading Conference for Colleges and Universities, held at Texas Christian University on April 24-25, 1952, reflects a growing interest in the development of courses in reading improvement on the college level. By custom, instruction in reading has been the peculiar function of the elementary school. The 24th Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education went so far as to advocate specific reading instruction in the first three grades only, but twelve years later, in its 36th Yearbook, this same organization advocated reading instruction through each year of the common school program. Today there is a growing acceptance that training in reading can be helpful at every level of instruction, and that a reading improvement program in college is justified if it produces only an increase in the rate of reading.

A growing number of colleges and universities are promoting reading improvement under a variety of programs. In the Southwest, Texas Christian University has enrolled 137 students in five sections meeting three days a week for two hours credit; Texas A.&M. lists a reading course as a one-credit-hour elective in its basic program and has more than 400 students in 12 sections meeting three times a week; the University of Oklahoma assigns graduate assistants to groups of 10 to 12 students for an eight week course. Elsewhere, Purdue and Cornell have notably successful programs. Iowa State University includes reading as one of the four basic skills in a communications course, the other skills being listening, writing, and speaking.

The programs have developed variously, but have been most successful when they have been pushed from the administrative level. They have been successfully assigned to English Departments, schools of Education, or to the guidance services, and joint sponsorship has been found to be entirely practicable, to the counseling services and instructional staffs jointly surveying the needs of students, selecting those who need the special attention of a reading program, and determining the approach to be used, whether through the clinical method, through group instruction, or through a combination of techniques.

Methods used are manifold. Experience at Texas Christian University points to the advisability of concentrating on a few areas - comprehension, rate, vocabulary, reading in thought units, and directed reading -- rather than to attempt a wider approach through a scattering of techniques. Training in word recognition, or "phonics," is strongly advocated for those students whose deficiencies in these learnings point to special needs in this direction. Among the various mechanical devices which are available, the most generally used is the pacing device, which moves a curtain or shutter downward at a controlled rate over a page of reading material and thus requires an acceleration of the speed of reading. Schools with well-organized programs usually have enough of these machines to enable an entire class to use them at one time. Next in favor is the con-

trolled-exposure projector, or tachistoscope for training in quick perception and recognition. With this device, students begin training with numbers of five digits at one-second exposure, and gradually reduce the interval of exposure to one-hundreth of a second, while the number of digits is expanded to seven and nine. The telebinocular, for detecting particular difficulties in vision, is accepted as regular equipment where a clinical approach is used. Films on reading improvement produced by Harvard University and Iowa State University are also much in favor.

Opinions vary as to the value of the mechanical devices. Some feel that the specific habits developed by the pacing device and the flash meter are a most effective foundation for improved skill; others think that students will be helped quite as effectively if they are simply sent to the library for a free reading period; still others maintain that the particular value of these devices, or "gadgets" is to interest the student and to provide him with an objective measure of the progress he is making.

At its closing session, The First Southwest Reading Conference voted to provide for a continuing organization by choosing an executive committee headed by O.S. Causey to publish the proceedings of the conference and to arrange for a 1953 meeting.

The distribution of representatives at the conference by position and departments was as follows: English, eleven. Education, eleven. Reading, eight. Deans, six. Psychology, two. Not designated, three.

FORTY QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BEFORE AND DURING THE CONFERENCE

1. Should college credit be given for work taken in a reading program? If so, how much credit?

   The trend is definitely in the direction of assignment of credit for work done in college reading programs. A recent survey of current practices shows a variation from no credit to three semester hours.

2. In a program where improvement of reading ability must be on a voluntary basis how can the students best be encouraged to take the course?

   (1) Faculty recognition of need for improvement of reading ability of both faculty and students, (2) faculty recognition of the effectiveness of the reading program, (3) student recognition of opportunity offered in the reading program, (4) active counselling service.

3. What should be the administrative setup for administering a reading program?

   See "PROBLEMS IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF A COLLEGE READING PROGRAM", by Dr. Albert J. Kingston and "THE READING PROGRAM IN THE COLLEGE CURRICULUM", by Dr. William Eller, in this issue.

4. Should credit be given for how-to-study courses?

   This question is still debatable. A considerable number of colleges and universities give credit for "orientation courses" and similar courses by other names which are largely how-to-study courses. Is there not a distinction to be made between courses designed for improvement of reading ability and how-to-study courses?

5. Would a non-credit course, made a pre-requisite for sophomore English, be a good place in the curriculum for remedial reading?

   Yes.

6. What are the most useful instruments for improving reading? Costs?

   The ideally equipped reading clinic or laboratory would contain the aids listed below. The list is arranged in descending order of importance of the instruments.

   (1) Reading Pacers. (listed in order of their appearance on the market). The Reading Rate Controller, The Three

Dimension Co., 4555 W. Addison Street, Chicago 41, Illinois. Price $85.00. The Reading Accelerator, Science Research Associates, Chicago, Illinois, Price $65.00 plus small charge for manual. The Keystone Reading Pacer, Keystone View Company, Meadeville, Pennsylvania, Price, approximately $100.00.

(2) (a) Tachistoscopes. (Large instrument for group work) Flashmeter, Keystone View Company, Meadeville, Pennsylvania. Price $238.50

(b) Tachistoscopes (Small instruments for individual or small group work). Society for Visual Education, Chicago, Illinois, Price, approximately $100.00. American Optical Company (offices in most of the large cities) The Three Dimension Company, Chicago, Illinois, The Stereo-Optical Company, 3539 North Kenton, Chicago 41, Illinois, Price $65.00.

(3) Films. Harvard Films. Distributed by Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass. Price, $245.00 for sixteen films. High School Reading Training Films. Distributed by Extension Division, State University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa. Price, $125.00 for fourteen films.

(4) Visual screening instruments. Telebinocular. Keystone View Co., Meadeville, Pa. Price $215.00. Ortho-Rater.

(5) Ophthalmograph (Instrument for clinical diagnosis). American Optical Co. Price $400.00.

7. Why can't we have a newsletter so we can be informed about what is being done in reading programs?

   A newsletter can be published if a sufficiently large number of persons are interested in supporting the publication. It is suggested that a newsletter be considered at the next meeting of the conference.

8. To what extent should the reading program be voluntary for college students?

   The writer knows of no college that requires all of its students to take a reading course for credit. Howard College, Birmingham, Alabama requires such a course of all freshmen.

9. Should students bear any of the expense of the reading program?

A fee to cover the cost of mimeographed materials, tests, etc. seems reasonable. Some of the colleges assemble the expendable materials in workbook form and require the students to purchase them. Some institutions are in position to charge a larger fee to cover additional costs.

10. To what extent should students doing advanced work in student personnel and Education be utilized in the instructional program?

    The same principles apply in this case as in other areas of instruction.

11. Does the college have an obligation to offer remedial training to elementary and secondary students in their areas? If not, should they furnish facilities for diagnosing the reading problems of this group?

    No. A considerable number of colleges are recognizing the need in this field and are extending the services of the reading clinics to include a limited number of elementary and high school students. A fee is usually charged for diagnosis except in cases where the diagnosis is made as a demonstration procedure in the training of teachers of reading. Tuition is usually charged in cases where remedial instruction is provided.

12. To have a successful reading program, what would be the minimum of reading materials and methods to be used?

    See, "Methods, Techniques, Procedures and Materials Used in the College Reading Program", by Dr. A. L. Long, in this issue.

13. To do remedial reading, approximately how many students should be grouped together in one group for instruction?

    Opinions vary on this question. A great deal depends upon the ingenuity and ability of the teacher and the modus operandi of the program. Most specialists feel, however, that special classes should not exceed 25-30 students. Perhaps good discussions at the next conference meeting will result in the pooling of experiences of a sufficiently large number of teachers to give more light on this problem.

14. What is the minimum amount of time per week that will likely produce good results in remedial reading? How should this time be distributed?

Little research has been done to determine the optimal number of hours per week which should be devoted to reading instruction. Most successful college programs seem to operate on either two or three periods of instruction per week. A good general rule to follow is to organize the reading program so that sufficient training time is provided to insure the development and maintenance of more adequote skills. Training time should be distributed so that the maximum needs of the students are met.

15. What institutions are training good teachers of remedial reading?

Many institutions are training good remedial reading teachers. Space prevents an adequate listing. Some of the well-known schools are: University of Chicago, Temple University, New York University, Columbia University, State University of Iowa, University of Maryland, Boston University.

16. Are tables available that show how rapidly a person at a given level of intelligence should read? If so, where?

As far as the writer knows, no tables of this kind have been prepared. In a recent report of a study made by Barbe and Grilk of fifty two tenth grade pupils in which the Henmon-Nelson Tests of Mental Ability and the Iowa Silent Reading Tests were used a plus .12 correlation is shown between reading rate and IQ. The writers comment that the plus .12 is "not a statistically significant correlation." (See Correlations between Reading Factors and IQ, by Walter Barbe and Werner Grilk in March 1 issue of School and Society.) Certainly a five year old child who has an IQ of 140 cannot be expected to read as well as a child of fifteen who has an IQ of 100.

17. What reading materials, or what types of materials, are best suited to a program of remedial reading?

All sorts of material should be utilized in a college reading program. Material should vary from extremely easy reading to difficult material. It should represent a cross-section of all of the types of material a student will encounter in his program. It must have a high interest level so that students will be motivated to read. (See Methods, Materials, Techniques, and Procedures Used in College Reading Programs by Dr. A.L. Long in this issue.

18. Have tests been devised to determine correlation between progress made in reading and, as a result of this progress, improvement in other courses, such as history, sociology, math., etc? If so, what is percent of correlation?

Many studies have been published to illustrate that the gains made by students in a college reading program have resulted in gains in grade-point ratios in other courses. Other studies have pointed out that the number of student failures in some subject areas have been decreased. The writer does not understand the question concerning "tests" and "percent of correlation". As grading standards vary in different institutions and gains vary among reading programs, no study would have validity outside of the university in which it was made.

19. What is the per-student cost of a reading program?

The per-student cost of a program depends upon the number of students enrolled, the amount and cost of equipment and material utilized, the cost of practice and testing materials employed, and the salary paid to those who conduct the program. At Texas A. & M., the per-student cost is estimated to be $15.00 per semester.

20. Does the reading program offer anything for the student with a bi-lingual background and consequent lack of English vocabulary?

If proper diagnosis of the student's disability is made and if individualized training is provided, the bi-lingual student can be greatly assisted. It is probably a mistake, however, to treat these students as pure reading disabilities. Often a special course in English would be of greater assistance to them.

21. How does the reading program relate to the lack of background and minimal experience basis for vocabulary?

The writer is not quite certain of the meaning of this question. It is assumed that the questioner is interested in finding out what steps should be taken to provide a more adequate experience to the student in order to develop vocabulary. Many experiences are provided through a great variety of reading exercises, special vocabulary exercises, and audio-visual aids. These are all designed to assist the student who is handicapped by minimal experiences in vocabulary.

22. What role should machines play in the college reading clinic?

The reading pacer has two roles: (1) it provides motivation, (2) it provides a method for frequent student recognition of progress made in improvement of rate and comprehension. If materials read by students with aid of reading pacers are carefully chosen and properly prepared with frequent comprehension tests, the students can determine at any time his progress in improvement of reading rate and comprehension.

The function of the tachistoscope in the reading program is improvement of rate and accuracy of perception by (1) increasing the span of recognition (seeing more words per eye-fixation), (2) reducing the duration of eye fixations.

Films combine some of the values of reading pacers and tachistoscopes. Films are viewed with "far distance vision." The printed page is read with "near distance vision." There may be a difference between the two in effectiveness in making desirable changes in reading habits.

The role of instruments designed for school testing of vision is simply that of detecting defective vision so that students with defective vision may be referred to eye-specialists.

The ophthalmograph is a diagnostic instrument. It makes a record of eye movements on thirty five millimeter film while the student is reading an assigned number of lines. Interpretation of the film gives the following: reading rate, number of eye-fixations per line, number of words in each eye-fixation, duration of each fixation, number of regressions per line or per number of lines read, return sweep -- eye-movement from end of line of print to the beginning of the next line.

23. Should emphasis be placed upon eye-movements?

Opinions vary. Center and Persons give a large part of the first chapter to eye-movements in each of their three books, "Problems in Reading and Thinking," "Experiences in Reading and Thinking" and "Practices in Reading and Thinking." (The Macmillan Company) The students using these books are made strongly conscious of eye-movements.

A strong emphasis upon eye-movements makes many students "over-conscious" of eye movements and causes them to center attention upon their own eye-movements with a loss

of attention to the thoughts expressed on the printed page. This writer makes no reference to eye-movements to students. Better results are obtained by substituting the term "thought grasp" for the terms "eye-fixation." Prospective teachers in methods courses should acquire a thorough understanding of the nature and functions of eye-movements in reading and acquire the ability to interpret ophthalmograph film records.

24. When material is obtained from magazines or newspapers, what kind of comprehension check is made?

The comprehension check on magazine and newspaper articles is usually made by using the teacher-made tests. These tests may be either objective or subjective. The Readers Digest, Pleasantville, New York, has prepared questions for use in schools, on articles in each issue of the publication. These questions are of various types and some of them have been standardized. Harpers Magazine, Arlington Street, Boston, Mass. also has a reading service. Interested persons may get details and prices of these services by writing to the Education Department of these publications.

25. Can eye-movements be reliably measured without the use of an Ophthalmograph?

Yes, but not with a high degree of accuracy.

26. Which department of the college should be responsible for teaching reading?

See discussion of this problem in "Summary of the Conference," by Dr. Rudolph Fiehler, in this issue.

27. Is tachistoscopic training an essential part of the reading program?

The tachistoscope is a valuable aid. Good programs can be conducted without it.

28. Are standardized tests available? What are they? Do they test progress in both comprehension and speed?

Several standardized tests for grades eight to thirteen are available. Two widely used tests are the Iowa Silent Reading Test, published by World Book Company, Yonkers-On-Hudson, New York, and Diagnostic Reading Test-Survey section, published by Science Research Associates, 57 Grand Ave., Chicago,

Illinois. The Iowa Silent Reading Test is designed to measure rate, comprehension, directed reading, paragraph comprehension, word meaning, sentence meaning, poetry comprehension, use of index, selection of key words. The S.R.A. Test is designed to measure rate, comprehension and vocabulary. Four forms of each of the two tests have been standardized so that progress in the progress of each of the skills measured may be revealed.

29. Have instructors in other departments been convinced of the value of a reading program? Are they cooperative?

Situations in regard to the point of this question vary from institution to institution, of course. In colleges where a good reading program has been in operation long enough to prove its value the student counsellors frequently assign students to the reading course. See answer to question seven.

30. Could the reading program be made a part of English Composition course?

Methods are quite generally in use in the Freshman English course that would need to be materially altered if adequate improvement in reading ability should become a major objective of the course. Some plans are being made at this time for experimental work in this area.

31. Are any of the represented institutions using the Harvard Reading Films? If so, are they used with the entire group? What has been the success of students in handling the comprehension checks that accompany the films?

Seventeen colleges and universities cooperating in the survey mentioned in The Preface reported the use of films. Some are using Iowa Films. The second and third parts of this question were not answered during the conference. The Executive Committee will furnish, on request, the list of institutions using films.

32. What would you do about spelling in a reading program?

Spelling is an integral part of vocabulary building just as vocabulary building is a part of any good reading program.

33. How many programs include study habits?

Seven of the programs reported in the study mentioned in The Preface included study habits, study skills, study techniques or study methods.

34. Is there not a certain danger in arbitrarily assuming that the student's reading rate is the same for all types of materials?

Yes.

35. Does a student have "a rate" or "rates" of comprehension -- (1) literary (2) scientific (3) mathematical (4) sociological (5) recreational?

This question suggests additional questions. What is recreational reading material? Does literature provide opportunity for recreational reading? Is sociology scientific? Is modern literature without scientific content? Could a journal of mathematics contain recreational reading for a genius? What proportion of mathematical reading materials of today is made up of problem-solving, which is supposed to "slow down" the mental processes? If there are five distinct fields or areas into which reading materials can be classified (???), what about the interest factor and background of training in relation to the different fields? Does a student of sociology read sociology faster than he reads a recreational article in a popular magazine?

The writer thinks it is not unlikely that some fallacies have developed relating to the classification of reading according to the five areas named in the question -- fallacies that are not unlike the widely accepted fallacy that "a slow reader is a good reader". It is known now that generally people who have an above-average reading rate comprehend what is read more fully than does the slow reader.

Perhaps teachers need to make an effort to avoid the fallacy of thinking of difficulty of reading as being too closely related to subject matter fields and recognize more fully the range of difficulty in given fields. An example illustrates the point. Hawthorne's Tales and Sketches and The Story by Schorer were assigned as reading to a college class. Both books are "(1) literary". Each is a volume of short stories. The two books were read by the same students under the same conditions. Rates and comprehension scores were recorded for each story in both books. The first book was read at a slower average rate and with lower average comprehension scores.

36. Do you use grouping as a technique to meet individual differences?

Each student works individually to improve his or her reading ability in the course in Developmental Reading at Texas Christian University. The grouping technique is not used in the course.

37. When the reading pattern of a student before training is compared with his reading pattern after training what is the most outstanding difference?

The answers to this question might vary according to the values assigned by the person analyzing the two patterns. One of the most outstanding differences, if not the most outstanding difference, is the improvement in ability of the student to read in "thought units" rather than "word by word". The average college student before taking a course for the improvement of reading ability sees and thinks an average of a slightly more than one word at a time. The following would be read approximately as indicated. "Each/speaker/at the/conference/revealed/readily/to the/aud/ience/that/much time/had been/spent/and/extensive/reading/had been/done/in the/prepa/ration/of his/address." A good reader takes the thoughts from the printed page in "thought grasps", possibly as follows: "Each speaker/at the conference/revealed readily/to the audience/that much time/had been spent/and extensive reading/had been done/in the preparation/of his address." The result is a higher rate of comprehension and more thorough comprehension. Reading becomes a more satisfying experience.

38. Is there a place for a course in the improvement of reading in the Adult Education program?

A considerable number of institutions have made provision for such a course for adults. Professional people and business executives recognize the need for better and faster reading. Night classes appear to be best suited for meeting this need.

39. Is democracy best served when the reading program is limited to remedial reading?

No. Future leadership will come largely from the large group of college students who are average readers or better than average readers. The demands upon them for extensive use of the printed page will be great. Their reading ability can be

very greatly improved while they are in college by a course in developmental reading.

40. Is the reading ability of faculty members improvable?

Yes, definitely. The suggestion has been made that a course taken by faculty members for the improvement of their reading ability is the most desirable step in initiating a reading program in a college or university.

ROSTER OF REPRESENTATIVES

Angelica, Mother, Our Lady of the Lake College, San Antonio, Texas.
Baldwin, J.R., Lee College, Baytown, Texas.
Baynes, Mary Virginia, Burleson County Schools, Caldwell, Texas.
Beatrix, Sister Mary, Our Lady of Victory College, Fort Worth, Texas.
Bracken, Mrs. Dorothy Kendall, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas.
Briggs, J. Allen, Hardin Simmons University, Abilene, Texas.
Carroll, Hazel Horn, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas.
Carse, William, Denton County Public Schools, Denton, Texas.
Chievitz, Mrs. Gene, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, New Mexico.
Craig, Mrs. Chute, Texas Weslyan College, Fort Worth, Texas.
DeFigh, Miss Loris, University of Tulsa, Tulsa, Oklahoma.
Denton, Allan E., Texas A.&M. College, College Station, Texas.
Dotson, Elsie, University of Texas, Austin, Texas.
Driskill, Mattie, Southwestern College of Oklahoma, Weatherford, Oklahoma.
Elizabeth, Sister, Our Lady of Victory College, Fort Worth, Texas.
Eller, William, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma.
Farmer, Ray, Highlands University, Las Vegas, New Mexico.
Fiehler, Rudolph, Southern State College, Magnolia, Arkansas.
Generasa, Sister, Our Lady of the Lake College, San Antonio, Texas.
Harris, Louie, Oklahoma College for Women, Chickasha, Oklahoma.
Ivan, Mrs. Martha, Kilgore College, Kilgore, Texas.
Kingston, Albert J., Texas A. & M College, College Station, Texas.
Kuhlmann, D.S., Texas Lutheran College, Saguin, Texas.
Kutach, W.D., Texas A. & M. College, College Station, Texas.
Long, A.L., Stephen F. Austin State College, Nacogdoches, Texas.
Miller, Walter C., Baylor University, Waco, Texas.
Muncie, Mrs. Nina B., Conner's State Agricultural College, Warner, Oklahoma.
Murphy, Harold, East Texas State College, Commerce, Texas.
Petrine, Sister Mary, Loyola University, New Orleans, Louisiana.
Phares, Ross, East Texas Baptist College, Marshall, Texas.
Riggs, Mrs. Kathleen L., 1004 N.W. 18th, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.
Robinson, William J., Dallas Public Schools, Dallas, Texas.
Randell, Walter, Lee College, Baytown, Texas.
Sellars, David, Fort Worth Public Schools, Fort Worth, Texas.
Simons, Mrs. I.R., Amon Carter-Riverside High School, Fort Worth, Texas
Stanford, Madge, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas.
Uzzell, Minter, Bacone College, Bacone, Oklahoma.
Ward, W.E., Texas Wesleyan College, Fort Worth, Texas.
Watkins, R.H., Decatur Baptist College, Decatur, Texas.
Westbrook, Mary Hope, Tarleton State College, Stephenville, Texas.
Williams, C.C., North Texas State College, Denton, Texas.
Wills, Mrs. I.A., John Brown University, Siloam Springs, Oklahoma.